

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: MORE THAN A NAME CHANGE

Civil Air Patrol Senior Programs has changed its name to Professional Development. Proposed and adopted by CAP's National Board, the name change reflects CAP's evolving philosophy about senior member educational development. Professional Development moves beyond mandatory training for promotion and awards, to value-added education to meet the needs of today's senior members.

"The courses and training we offer have moved beyond the basic requirements for senior member advancement," said Mark Wilkinson, Chief of Professional Development. "Over the past several years, our offerings have expanded to include education tailored to the specialty of the member, executive leadership and management skills, and general career advancement."

CAP's professional development programs are

designed to help the member develop the skills they need to carry out their CAP duties, and develop the managerial skills necessary to succeed, not only in CAP, but in their civilian career as well.

"Members train when they feel their time is well spent. Our courses are developed with this in mind," said Wilkinson. "Members taking professional development courses will find that in the end they will actually have more time to participate in CAP activities because the courses will show them how to work smarter and faster. The weekends that members spend at a Squadron Leadership School or a Unit Commanders Course, for example, will pay big dividends for them as they go back to their units and operate in the field environment."

"Members will also find that the interpersonal skills they learn through CAP courses will help them in their civilian careers," continued Wilkinson. "The management, communications, leadership, and other topics we teach are in demand by employers."

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The evolution taking place in senior member professional development also includes how CAP's courses are delivered. "We will be incorporating more online training," said Wilkinson. "Online training has great advantages for the members. They can take an online CAP course anywhere, anytime they have access to a computer and internet access. This makes it very easy for members to schedule training. Online training will not replace in-residence courses or some paper-based correspondence training, but will augment the training already being offered."

CAP members should find that the name change, and the evolution in thinking that the name change represents, is indicative of the high quality of training that CAP provides to all its members. Take a look at CAP Professional Development, and find out for yourself.



EFFECTIVE TEST ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

Springtime is test time. This is just a quick reminder about proper testing procedures, especially with Extension Course Institute (ECI) course examinations. Be sure to follow proper testing procedures whenever administering an examination. Below are the major ECI test procedures prescribed by CAP, and can be found in CAPR 50-4, Test Administration and Security.

- When the ECI test is received, check the control numbers (shown in the window of the envelope) to ensure that you have received the correct test for the member. You do not need to open the envelope to confirm you have the correct test.
- Do not open the test packet until the scheduled testing period, and only open in the presence of the examinee.
- Tests are only administered by the Test Control Officer (TCO) or alternate TCO, as identified on the CAP Form 53, Signature Verification Card.
- ALL ECI EXAMS, UNLESS NOTED ON THE EXAM, ARE CLOSED BOOK.
- Allow three hours for the course exam. The test will be administered in one session only.
- The testing officer or proctor will remain in the room with the examinee until the test is completed.
- More than one person may test at the same time. However, examinees will be closely monitored by the testing officer or proctor at all times. No talking is allowed between examinees.
- After the test is completed, examine test materials to verify the examinee has returned all materials, including authorized worksheets, if applicable.
- Allow a test examinee access to the course examination only during the authorized test administration period and do not allow the examinee to review the contents of the examination once the testing period has ended and the exam booklet has been returned to the examiner.
- Reseal the test booklet in the exam envelope and mark it for destruction in 45 days. Retain the test booklet for 45 days from the date the examinee has completed the test or until notification that the examination results have been received. **TELL THE EXAMINEE THAT THE EXAM BOOKLET WILL BE DESTROYED IN 45 DAYS UNLESS HE OR SHE NOTIFIES YOU THAT THE RESULTS HAVE NOT BEEN RECEIVED.**
- Collect and shred, pulp, or burn all used scratch paper and worksheets.
- In addition to the above procedures, the following practices ***must be avoided*** concerning proper test security:
 - Improper test storage.
 - Unauthorized access to test materials.
 - Unauthorized copying of test materials.
 - Allowing examinees access to test materials before test time.
 - Having an oral or written discussion of test material with an unauthorized person.
 - Bringing unauthorized materials into the testing area.
 - Examinees keeping test materials and/or notes/scratch paper after the test is completed.
 - Leaving examinees alone during the testing period.
 - Permitting open-book tests or the use of unauthorized materials when testing.
 - Improper destruction of test materials.
 - Any action that could result in a test compromise.

Test security, particularly with regard to ECI examinations, is a serious matter. ECI takes test security very seriously. Test compromises may result in the unit losing test privileges, students losing credit for the course, and commanders and members receiving administrative punishment through Civil Air Patrol.

The testing procedures identified above are simple and add little time and burden for the testing officer. More importantly, they can prevent misunderstandings and trouble for the unit. It just makes good sense to follow these procedures. When you do you'll make the testing experience more orderly and secure for your members.

ONLINE TRAINING IN CAP

DON HINES

CHIEF, DISTANCE LEARNING

One thing that has emerged over the past several years is a clear need for computers and internet access throughout CAP. Access to the internet promises not only more timely and accurate reporting from the field, it will also open up a world of training to CAP members from a wide variety of sources, when and where it is needed.

ADVANTAGES OF INTERNET ACCESS

Brig Gen James Bobick, CAP National Commander, has advocated adding computers with internet access at the unit level to facilitate reimbursements and improve inputs to national databases such as the aircraft fleet database. Internet access will allow more timely and accurate reporting of unit training activities and will allow access to a multitude of online training courses currently being developed throughout the federal government. One example is the new CAP professional development modules which were recently completed by Air Command and Staff College students. These interactive modules cover topics from customs and courtesies to leadership and accountability. The modules will be added to the CAP web page and will be accessible by individuals or may be downloaded and presented in a seminar environment.

Internet access will also facilitate the flow of communications between the field and headquarters now handled by mass monthly mailouts, which often do not reach all the people who need the information. Since additional electronic copies are virtually free, they can be sent to as many or as few members as desired. CAP is currently seeking funding to provide every CAP unit at least one computer with internet access.

CAP will initially provide courses with basic text and graphics that will function over the 28.8 modem typical in many homes. If students have high-speed access from home, work, or the unit, they could opt for a dynamic version of the course with pictures, simulations, and other applications added as more bandwidth is available. As bandwidth increases, more students would migrate to the higher levels of learning and interaction available from the more interactive courses.

ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE TRAINING

Online training is well suited to improve recurring training such as completing CAP forms and reports. Training can be developed using authoring tools such as Toolbook and incorporated into the CAP learning management system. This will allow delivery of courses to individuals who need it, anytime, anywhere, and will provide a record of course completion. Using a learning management system will allow CAP to manage access, monitor progress and scores, establish study teams, and generate reports to track learning. As we expand our DL program we will be able to provide online certification and re-certification on a multitude of tasks that will benefit members in their civilian occupations as well as their CAP specialties. Available, standardized, certifiable online training will help CAP address issues of quality and currency of training in the future.

Learning, from even a good training session, disappears quickly unless the knowledge is applied. Another advantage of online training is that it provides a tool to follow up online training with collaborative training that would allow students to apply what they learned individually by participating with others in follow-up training using case studies and scenarios.

One great feature of online training for CAP is its availability,

anytime, anywhere, in preference to annual or scheduled training class which members may or may not be able to attend. Quality online training courses can be easily updated. The training can be adapted for presentation to individuals or groups, based on specific needs. Internet-based training combined with a course management system will allow emphasis on quality training without generating a burden of additional paperwork.

SHIFT OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

One job of the national staff is to provide nationally standardized safety and training programs to volunteers, while keeping in mind the impact these programs have on the field in terms of paperwork. Headquarters is expected to maximize the opportunities for enjoyment while reducing the administrative workload on the volunteers. Internet-based training does this. Online training does not generate additional administrative paperwork because the enrollment and testing procedures are done electronically. Online training shifts the administrative burden of training and record keeping from the local unit to headquarters and the course management system which tracks enrollment, progress, and provides the basis for certification procedures.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Providing internet training and access to CAP volunteers opens up tremendous future training possibilities for members as more agencies develop a multitude of online courses. Access to quality training from many of those government agencies will be a great incentive for members to join and continue their membership in a volunteer organization like CAP.

For additional information see the article, *Education, learning: The future of Civil Air Patrol* CAP News, January 2000.

WRITING EFFECTIVE NOMINATIONS

Thanking members for what they do is an integral part of being a leader in Civil Air Patrol. The most visible way to thank a member is to nominate them for one of Civil Air Patrol's many awards. Any member can nominate another for an award. The key to having a member win an award is found in planning a winning strategy to support your choice.

Be sure to choose the right award for the member you want to thank. Be sure the award you choose matches what the member has done. Each award has its own specific nomination criteria; make sure your nomination meets the criteria. Wings, regions, and national level nominations have been turned down because the award doesn't match the member achievement.

Follow the instructions for submitting the nomination. Many awards have different instructions for nomination. For instance, some awards require supporting documentation, while others specify that the narrative fit on one sheet of paper, or require that a photo be submitted. Be sure that you follow the instructions for the award to

ensure that your nomination isn't returned.

Look at the guiding directive. Each award has a guiding directive, most awards can be found in CAP Regulation 39-3, *Award of CAP Medals, Ribbons, and Certificates*. Others can be found in pertinent CAP directives, and region and wing supplements.

Beat the deadlines. If the award you have selected has a deadline for submission, get it in on time. Many wings and regions, and the National Headquarters, will void the nomination if it isn't received in time.

Secure the nomination and supporting documents together. Bind them in a notebook, staple them together, or put them in a folder. Whatever method you choose, make sure that the documents are not lost as they go up the command chain.

Plan what you want to say. The nomination is sure to compete against others. Do your nominee justice by writing a clear, concise, and effective narrative. Be sure to include all the pertinent information. Do not assume that people who are reading it are already aware of your nominee's achievements. Write as if the award's committee has never met the member, because in some cases, they haven't.

Make it look professional. Neatness counts. The member has spent much time in going the extra mile. But their work won't be conveyed if their nomination packages looks like it has just been thrown together. Before you send in the package, take a critical look at it. Does it do justice to the member and your unit?

Have a backup plan. Be ready to award a Certificate of Accomplishment or Achievement, Commander's Commendation, or plaque if your nominee isn't selected.

Make sure your nomination arrives at its destination. Call to make sure that the next level of command has received the nomination, and that it went to the right office. Nominations do get lost. Ask before it's too late.

These few tips will make it easier for you to submit winning nominations. They don't take much time, and will pay off big when your members begin to win.

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